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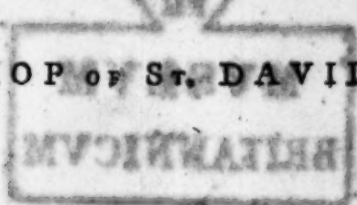
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FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

L O R D P E T R E, K.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

DOCTOR HORSLEY,

BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.



L O N D O N:

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R E T E R

FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD PETER

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

DOCTOR HORSTLEY



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LONDON

FOR SALE BY THE

MY LORD,

UNTIL now, I little thought of ever being engaged in a controversial correspondence with any man; much less, with a learned Bishop of the Church of England. But a pamphlet having lately appeared, entitled, *A Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters*, publicly received as coming from your Lordship's pen; in which you have been pleased to throw out expressions so injurious to the English Catholics in general, and so pointedly injurious to the very few remaining Catholic Peers in particular, who, with me, still adhere to the religion of our ancestors; that I could not, on reading them, but feel as every man of honour ought to feel: and, feeling as I do, I cannot help expostulating with your Lordship on the very great impropriety of traducing us; and that at a time when we fondly entertain hopes of being relieved from the pressure of cruel statutes,

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through the liberality of the age, and by the moderation and enlightened wisdom of our present Legislature.

Though the small number of remaining Catholic Peers, as I have already observed, brings the reflection nearly to a personal attack on their characters, I shall omit all further observations on its illiberality and injustice, to excuse your Lordship from any direct intention to injure individuals. But, my Lord, the impression those lines may have made on the public, ought to be done away; and I am so well convinced of your candor and uprightness, that I entertain scarcely any doubt, but that your Lordship will assist, on some future occasion, the cause of justice and humanity, so far as to acknowledge wherein you have been mistaken.

My Lord, the Catholic world is as honorable and as conscientious as any other part of the globe; and would it not indeed be repugnant to sound reason to believe, that, if a religion held perjury lawful, and oaths not binding and indefeasibly obligatory, an honest man could any longer remain a member of such a Church? But such must be the case, if your assertion be admitted; since I scarcely believe
you

your Lordship will deny, that many thousands of honourable, religious, and conscientious men are in communion with the See of Rome.

My Lord, your zeal to prove that the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts would admit into office Papists (as you call them) as well as Protestant Dissenters, led you (as too much zeal often does) to prove too much. In doing that, your Lordship has rendered it absolutely necessary; that I should shew on what bad and groundless authority your Lordship has, for the above purpose, hazarded those assertions.

But, my Lord, before I proceed any further in the arguments I mean to produce, I beg leave to declare, that it is far from my intention to pass any censure on the great outlines of your Lordship's work.—Admitting your positions, I grant your reasoning to be just. How far those positions will be allowed, is not the object of my enquiry. The principles favourable to Church Establishments—Church Hierarchy—Articles of Faith—and Ecclesiastical Laws, are so fully interwoven with the discipline of our Church, and have so often been the foundations of abuse against us, as to leave no room for your Lordship to doubt of our attachment to the form of Ecclesiastical Government

as by Law established ; which, jointly with the free constitution of this country as settled at the Revolution, we not only admire as the most perfect system of religious and civil liberty, but hold ourselves indispensably bound to support and maintain. We lament, it is true, that the system of religious liberty was so partially carried into execution on that great and momentous occasion : but the circumstance of a Popish Pretender then existing, would not permit the politics of that day to perfect a system, which the generous Patron of the Revolution would willingly have promoted.

The Protestant Dissenters had, with great truth, and considerable illiberality, alleged, that “ the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, “ and the declaration against transubstantiation, “ have been found effectual, for more than a “ century, to exclude Papists from both Houses “ of Parliament ; and had asked, Why should “ not the same oaths, with the same declaration, “ tion, be as effectual to exclude them from “ those offices from which the Corporation and “ Test Acts were intended to exclude ? ”

To this your Lordship’s answer is strange indeed. You deny that Papists are excluded from Parliament by any oath or declaration
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 whatsoever

whatsoever; but merely by the notoriety of their Popery, from the Lower House; and from the Upper, by the sentiments inseparable from Hereditary Nobility. I will quote your own words: "Now the truth is, that the exclusion of Papists for the last century hath not been the effect of any oaths or declarations. For, if it be supposed that Papists, during all this time, have been governed by their old principles, no oaths or declarations made to Government, which their Church hath deemed heretical, can have bound their conscience." This, my Lord, is as highly insulting as it is unjust. It points out us Catholics as fools and knaves. If your Lordship's first assertion be true, we are a pack of egregious fools, both we and our forefathers, for stupidly believing, that we are truly and most effectually excluded from Parliament by the foresaid oaths and declaration, and by them alone; as effectually excluded, as if no Test or Corporation Act existed: so that, if these latter were to-morrow repealed, we should consider ourselves as not a bit more enabled to hold offices or be a Member of either House of Parliament, than we are at present.

But

But if your Lordship's second assertion (which you would establish as a proof of the first) be true, then we must be enormous knaves. Yet still our knavery must have a wonderful dash of folly—not common in the world of knaves. For, if no oaths or declarations can bind our consciences, why have we so long and so obstinately refused to take oaths and make declarations; the refusal of which has not only affected our seats in Parliament, but often deprived us of our legal inheritance, transferred our estates to the next Protestant Heir, and rendered us liable to all the disabilities of an outlawry? Besides, what should hinder us, having such pliant consciences, from complying with the Test and Corporation Acts themselves, but a folly not to be paralleled? Will he who makes no scruple of manifest perjury boggle at a religious ceremony; and deem it a greater crime to profane a temporary rite, than to transgress an eternal command? We sincerely reprobate both, my Lord; but the latter we reckon amongst the greatest of crimes that man can commit. Yet this is what your Lordship would impute to us.

It is true, that you seem to qualify the odious charge with a supposition; and that supposition
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with a second one—"if it be supposed that Papists during all this time have been governed by their old principles," &c. But that, in reality, you must have considered this double supposition equivalent to a positive assertion, is plain from this—that your Lordship's whole argument would otherwise be not only inconclusive (which it is in any view), but devoid of the smallest degree of plausibility. To have this, it must be considered as tantamount to—"Papists cannot be excluded from Parliament by oaths or declarations, because neither oaths nor declarations can bind their consciences." In this form the argument is direct and explicit; in the other, implicit and indirect: yet, after all, it is, in either form, no more than an impotent attempt to prove one false assertion by another equally false; for, have not I a right to suppose quite the reverse of what your Lordship supposes? Well; I do not barely suppose, but boldly affirm, that we English Catholics are not governed, never were governed, by principles (either old or new) that could induce or permit us to break or infringe any oath or declaration whatsoever made to Government; and that whatever oaths and declarations we have made, or may make, to Government, or fellow-subject

ject or human being whatsoever, no pretext of heresy can invalidate, no power on earth unbind our consciences from the strictest obligation of their contents.

In fact, my Lord, we have, from prejudices and misapprehension, sometimes refused to take even innocent oaths that were tendered to us; because we conceived we could not reconcile them with our religious creed. But your Lordship cannot produce a single instance of our having taken oaths, or made declarations, to the contents of which we have not scrupulously adhered. Now this, my Lord, I should be apt to consider as a proof of the delicacy of our consciences—not of their prostitution.

To the affirmation I have just now made, I am persuaded, moreover I am certain, that there is not a Roman Catholic in England, nor even a Papist (if such a description of men yet exist), who will not cheerfully accede; and, if required, support it by the most solemn asseveration. Will your Lordship still continue to suppose that we cannot be believed? Then indeed we must be, in your estimation, rogues of the deepest dye; who are not only unworthy of future relief, but deserve to be extirpated from the face of the earth.

Having

Having thus stated what, your Lordship thinks, is not the cause of our exclusion from Parliament, you next venture to say, what are the causes of our exclusion. You assign two. From the House of Commons, "the notoriety of our Popery, and the dread and abhorrence of the principles of the Church of Rome," exclude us; from the House of Lords, "the sentiments inseparable from hereditary nobility." Truly, my Lord, these are secrets, which you have revealed to us, of which we ourselves were totally ignorant. We thought, that our Commoners were precluded from being chosen Members of the Lower House, and our Peers from taking their seats in the Upper House of Parliament, merely because their tender consciences would not allow them to qualify themselves by the customary oaths. But since we are informed by your Lordship that this is not the case, we trust that you will stand up in your place, and move that those restraints, which you say are no real restraints, and of course useless, may be taken away. We shall then see how far *the notoriety of our Popery, &c.* will be the real means of our exclusion from the House of Commons; and whether our Peers will exclude themselves from the House of Lords, for the

purpose of becoming the Patrons of a Party; a party so small, as to be in the proportion of one to a hundred, and those dispersed all over the kingdom.

For my part, my Lord, I am free to confess that no distinction which I could gain, as the patron or protector of any party, would to me appear a compensation, or any thing like a compensation, for an exclusion from my hereditary place in the legislative council; and I should wonder much if any man, possessed of *the sentiments that ought to be inseparable from hereditary nobility*, were of a different opinion.

If, to attain admission, we were under the necessity of *using mean dissimulations*, I agree with your Lordship, that, as men of honour, we would and should exclude ourselves, rather than submit to them. But abrogate the foregoing oaths, my Lord, and we shall be under no such necessity. As long as they lie in our way, we do not cheerfully exclude ourselves from our place in the legislative council, but are cruelly excluded, because we will not dissemble or perjure ourselves; though, by so doing, all the laws against us would vanish, and all disabilities be removed, except what, in common with other Dissenters, would remain in force under the op-

ration of the Test and Corporation Acts. For I
 assure your Lordship, that we are altogether
 unacquainted with those pretended *subterfuges*
 which, you say, *the casuistry of our Church has*
provided for the relief of our consciences. Our
 clergy, or if you will our casuists, are, in some
 branches of polite learning and knowledge of
 the world, inferior to the generality of your clergy
 or casuists; but they are not inferior in probity
 and candor. There are weak and narrow minded
 men in all communions. There are, undoubt-
 edly, such in ours; but a narrow minded man,
 and a bad minded man, is not the same. Of the
 integrity of even the most bigotted of our cler-
 gy we can offer an immediate proof: several of
 them are so averse to our new proposed oath of
 allegiance, that they have publicly declared
 their disapprobation of it; from an idea that it
 contains some things which, in their misappre-
 hension, a Catholic cannot swear to. This I,
 and many others of our clergy and laity, think
 a sign of their ignorance and mistaken zeal: but
 surely it is no proof of their disingenuity; no
 proof that they have convenient *subterfuges* to
 relieve their own or their hearers consciences
 from the obligation of an oath; no proof that
 they are governed by a principle, that *no oaths*
declarations can bind.

The most madly aspiring Popes, thy Lord, seem to have known nothing of these pretended *subterfuges*. When they usurped the privilege of deposing kings, and absolving subjects from their oaths of allegiance, they did it overtly and barefacedly : but they never publicly authorised or permitted the faithful to take an oath, which they privately authorised them to break. Their conduct was quite the reverse. When our James the First offered to his Catholic subjects an oath of allegiance, which a great many Catholics were of opinion could be lawfully taken by them, Paul the Fifth moved heaven and earth to prevent them from taking it ; and was but too successful in his endeavours. Paul the Fifth never dreamed of those subterfuges of casuistry which your Lordship has so kindly provided for us ; otherwise he might have allowed, even encouraged the English Catholics to take the oath, and then secretly dispensed them from observing it.

The same observation is applicable to the late Irish oath. The Pope's Nuntio at Brussels, and at least a part of the court of Rome, did exert their influence with the Irish Catholics to prevent their taking that oath. But to what purpose make those exertions, if they had in their

own hands a ready subterfuge to render the taking of it of no moment ?

That the court of Rome will readily and explicitly renounce even its usurped privileges, is hardly to be expected. We know no court or potentate that have ever been guilty of so heroic a deed ; it is enough that it may be wrested from their hands, and that it be put out of their power to resume them *. The most respectable seats of learning have joined with most eminent divines, in confining the Papal claims within the due bounds of his spiritual situation ; and in no one particular point more strongly, than in his extravagant pretensions to dispense subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and oaths or compacts between man and man. There is not a tiara in Europe that has been more completely spoiled of its borrowed plumage. A Papal bull, that should pretend to infringe the rights of sovereigns or subjects, or interfere, in the smallest degree, with state affairs, would be laughed at and condemned by every Catholic nation in the world.

The small attention paid to the court of Rome, not only in these, but even in the times

* See the opinions of the Universities of Paris, Louvain, Doway, Alcalá, Salamanca, and Valladolid, in the Appendix.

of religious animosities, might be proved, by many passages from the history of this country, as well as from that of many others: but the repetition of historical facts would not only swell these sheets beyond the limits of a letter, but are almost useless at this day, when the influence of the Pope is not to be discovered in any corner of the world. Yet I cannot help mentioning one or two striking instances in our English history, as related by Mr. Hume.

When Elizabeth was placed by Parliament on the throne of these kingdoms, the Pope, in the plenitude of his pretended power over kings and kingdoms, pronounced our Queen illegitimate and an usurper, and her subjects absolved from their oaths of allegiance!—What was the consequence of these dreadful thunders from the see of Rome? Not as was expected.—* In the year 1569 an insurrection took place in the north, and the insurgents marched into England in full confidence of being joined by the Catholics: but, to their great astonishment, the Catholics, deaf to the admonitions of their supposed infallible Pope, not only did not join the rebels, but served their princess faithfully, and assisted vigorously in quashing the rebellion.

* Hume's Hist. last edit. vol. v. p. 164.

One instance more during the reign of this illustrious princeſs preſents itſelf, which may more forcibly prove the ſtrict adherence of Catholic allegiance to their ſovereigns, in oppoſition to their religious intereſts, and their ſuppoſed obedience to the ſpiritual head of their church, than the one already mentioned : and this is the circumſtance of the invincible armada. Philip of Spain, at an enormous expence of money, ſupported with benedictions, prayers, indulgences, and abſolutions on his ſide, with anathemas and excommunications againſt his enemies, prepared an armament of ſuch wonderful force that it obtained the name which, thank God, it did not ſupport. Thus equipped ſailed this grand fleet; attended with all the enthuſiaſm, fanaticiſm, and bigotry of the age; and confident of certain ſucceſs from the prophecies of their moſt holy divines.

When the religious object of this great expedition is conſidered, we ſhould naturally conceive it to have been a joyful day for the Catholics. Every thing inviting to man offered itſelf to their minds—reſtoration of their religion, ſo lately diſplaced from the eſtabliſhment; a gratification of revenge for religious perſecution, which had taken place againſt them about eight years

years before; and all this was to be attained, according to your Lordship's ideas, without the guilt of perjury on their minds, since they were absolved from their oaths of allegiance.

No, my Lord; their consciences would not allow them to swerve from their oath of allegiance; on the contrary, they exerted themselves in a particular manner*. They built ships with their own money; and, lest they should be suspected of want of fidelity under such trying circumstances, gave the command of them to protestants; themselves serving as volunteers.

This was not all—many able Catholics were in the Queen's councils, in parliament, and in the army. Among others, there were three illustrious names, whose families are yet remaining, of that religion, though excluded from following the glorious example of their ancestors, who particularly distinguished themselves on the day of trial; and these names are recorded in the lasting page of history—Sir Thomas Vavasor, Sir Thomas Gerrard, and Sir Charles Blount.

The event of this memorable day is too well

* Hume's Hist. last edit. vol. v. p. 338.

known, to require my proceeding any further.
 At, my Lord, what would have been the event
 that day, if the Catholics had thought them-
 selves absolved from their allegiance, and acted
 in favour of the Mother Church (as they are
 excused of doing; though they are supposed to
 be true on oaths and declarations to procure the
 extension and prosperity of it)? What would ac-
 tually have been the event I cannot pretend to
 affirm. But what, most likely, would have been
 the consequence of a general revolt of the Ca-
 tholics from their allegiance, when they were a
 majority of the nation, and supported by such
 an armament, I leave to your Lordship to deter-
 mine.

My Lord, having mentioned two instances
 where the Pope's dispensing power and absolv-
 ing from oaths did not avail him; I could bring,
 in addition, many instances where Protestants
 thought themselves authorised to fly from their
 allegiance, when Catholics did not: but these
 are rather instances of the general conduct of
 men, than instances tending to prove, that we
 know no power on earth authorised to
 dispense with oaths and compacts; or absolve
 men from the obligation of fulfilling punctu-

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ally every engagement entered into between man and man.

My Lord, I think by this time your Lordship must be convinced, that you writ, from prejudice, what, on mature reconsideration you will discover that you had not even the authority of any one Catholic University, or body of Catholic Divines, to justify you in asserting it to be a doctrine and principle of our religion that we might, by the means of *subterfuges* evade, explain away, or be absolved from oaths and declarations.

No, my Lord ; your Lordship cannot find any such support. The prejudice of education seems in this instance, to have set the bounds to your enquiries, as far as they may have related to the Religious Principles of Papists, as you afterwards distinguish them, of Roman Catholics a distinction very visible and very proper to be fully established. But in points of morality, which the obligation of oaths is a very essential branch, and on which all religions can have but one opinion ; Papists, Roman Catholics and Protestant Catholics—all do hold sacred, beyond the reach of any Prelate to dispense with, and solve from, or weaken, the faith of man pledged to one another.

With regard to us English Catholics in particular, your Lordship in another place (p. 13) seems to grant, that we cannot reasonably be suspected of being favourers of Papal usurpation. This observation is perfectly just. We certainly are not Papists, as described by the laws of England; and this leads me to say a few words on the distinction between a *Papist* and a *Protesting Catholic*.

Your Lordship cannot be ignorant, that in the course of last year, previous to our presenting a petition to Parliament to pray for further relief from the pressure of the remaining Penal statutes, an instrument, in form of a *PROTEST*, declaring our abhorrence of many pernicious doctrines attributed to us, and protesting against the Papal claims of supremacy itself, as far as it constituted an *imperium in imperio*, was signed by fifteen hundred of the chief Catholics in the Kingdom, by all the Peers and Gentlemen, and by two hundred of our Clergy. This instrument distinguishes not only between the temporal and spiritual powers of the Pope; but also expresses the operative nature of his spiritual situation: which, by no influence, and much less by any coercive means, he can make use of to fringe, molest, disturb or diminish the rights

of sovereigns and citizens, or to weaken the bond of union between a sovereign and his people, as expressed by the University of Louvain

The extent of those claims of the See of Rome has been the subject of many scholastic disputes; and the moths and worms have long had an ample feast on the many folios written on that, now pretty nearly exploded, system. But not so, where morality has been concerned; at that point unanimity prevails, as it does in acknowledging the Bishop of Rome to be the first Bishop of the Catholic Church: through the medium of which See your Lordship derive your ordination, equally with the Clergy of the Religion.

This spiritual power of the first Bishop, well as of all other Bishops, is purely of a spiritual nature; as established in the gospel, and declared by all our learned divines. "In as much as the only spiritual authority which we acknowledge, is that which we conscientiously believe to have been transmitted by Jesus Christ to his Church; not to regulate, by any outward co-action, civil and temporal concerns of subjects and citizens; but to direct souls by *persuasion* in the concerns of everlasting salvation."

My Lord, having set my hand to the above-mentioned Protest, I esteem myself, and those gentlemen who signed it with me, no more accountable for the obnoxious doctrines attributed to Papists, than your Lordship can possibly be for the doctrines of Methodists; or of any other sect; though all come under the general appellation of Protestants: nor no more than if I had, according to the due forms of law, renounced the harmless articles contained in the declaration against transubstantiation, and, by subterfuges and absolutions so readily provided for us by your Lordship, swore away my honour and my probity.

My Lord, as many other points of our principles are explained in the said Protest, besides what particularly relates to oaths and the Pope's jurisdiction, I have added a copy of it at full length, by way of appendix, for your Lordship's perusal; as also abstracts from the opinions of those Universities mentioned in the body of the letter.

My Lord, I shall now conclude this exposition of my principles, as well as those of the communion to which I belong: not, I can assure your Lordship, without suffering very considerably for them and myself; as men of honour,

nour, called on to exculpate ourselves from being suspected to prevaricate, to have subterfuges for our consciences, and to be incapable of being bound conscientiously by oaths.

I remain,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

most obedient

humble Servant,

PARK-LANE,
March 22, 1790.

PETRE.

A P P E N D I X.

No. I.

We whose Names are hereunto subscribed, Catholics of England, do freely, voluntarily, and of our own accord, make the following solemn Declaration and Protestation.

WHEREAS sentiments unfavourable to us as Citizens and Subjects, have been entertained by English Protestants, on account of principles which are asserted to be maintained by us, and other Catholics, and which principles are dangerous to Society, and totally repugnant to Political and Civil Liberty; it is a duty that we, the English Catholics, owe to our country as well as to ourselves, to protest in a formal and solemn manner against Doctrines that we condemn, and that constitute no part whatever of our Principles, Religion, or Belief.

We are the more anxious to free ourselves from

from such imputations, because divers Protestants, who profess themselves to be real friends to liberty of conscience, have, nevertheless, avowed themselves hostile to us on account of certain opinions which we are supposed to hold. And we do not blame those Protestants for their hostility, if it proceeds (as we hope it does) not from an intolerant spirit in matters of Religion, but from their being misinformed as to matters of fact.

If it were true, that we, the English Catholics, had adopted the maxims that are erroneously imputed to us, we acknowledge that we should merit the reproach of being dangerous enemies to the State; but we detest those unchristianlike and execrable maxims; and we severally claim, in common with men of all other religions, as a matter of Natural Justice, that we, the English Catholics, ought not to suffer for, or on account of, any wicked or erroneous Doctrines that may be held by any other Catholics, which Doctrines we publicly disclaim; any more than British Protestants ought to be rendered responsible for any dangerous Doctrines that may be held by any other Protestants, which Doctrines they, the British Protestants, disavow.

I. We have been accused of holding, as a principle of our Religion, that Princes excommunicated by the Pope and Council, or by authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their Subjects, or other persons.

But so far is the above-mentioned unchristian-like and abominable position from being a principle that we hold, that we reject, abhor, and detest it, and every part thereof, as execrable and impious; and we do solemnly declare, that neither the Pope, either with or without a General Council; nor any Prelate, nor any Priest, nor any Assembly of Prelates or Priests, nor any Ecclesiastical Power whatever, can absolve the subjects of this realm, or any of them, from their allegiance to his Majesty King George the Third, who is, by authority of Parliament, the lawful King of this realm, and of all the dominions thereunto belonging.

II. We have also been accused of holding, as a principle of our Religion, that implicit obedience is due from us to the Orders and Decrees of Popes and General Councils; and that, therefore, if the Pope, or any General Council should, for the good of the Church, command us to take up arms against Government, or by any means to subvert the laws and liberties of this

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country,

country, or to exterminate persons of a different persuasion from us, we (it is asserted by our accusers) hold ourselves bound to obey such Orders or Decrees on pain of eternal fire.

Whereas we positively deny, that we owe any such obedience to the Pope and General Council, or to either of them: and we believe that no act that is in itself immoral or dishonest can ever be justified by, or under colour that it is done, either for the good of the Church, or obedience to any Ecclesiastical Power whatever. We acknowledge no infallibility in the Pope, and we neither apprehend nor believe, that our disobedience to any such Orders or Decrees (should any such be given or made) could subject us to any punishment whatever. And we hold and insist, that the Catholic Church has no power that can, directly or indirectly, prejudice the rights of Protestants, inasmuch as it is strictly confined to the refusing to them a participation in her Sacraments and other Religious Privileges of her communion; which no Church (as we conceive) can be expected to give to those out of her pale, and which no person out of her pale will, we suppose, ever require.

And we do solemnly declare, that no Church or any Prelate, nor any Priest, nor any Assembly of Prelates or Priests, nor any Ecclesiastical

Power whatever, hath, have, or ought to have any jurisdiction or authority whatsoever within this Realm, that can, directly or indirectly, affect, or interfere with the independence, sovereignty, laws, constitution, or government thereof, or the rights, liberties, persons or properties of the people of the said realm, or of any of them; save only and except by the authority of Parliament; and that any such assumption of power would be an usurpation.

III. We have likewise been accused of holding, as a principle of our Religion, that the Pope, by virtue of his spiritual power, can dispense with the obligations of any compact or oath taken or entered into by a Catholic; that therefore, no oath of allegiance, or other oath, can bind us; and, consequently, that we can give no security for our allegiance to any Government.

There can be no doubt but that this conclusion would be just, if the original proposition, upon which it is founded, were true: but we positively deny, that we do hold any such principle; and we do solemnly declare, that neither the Pope, nor any Prelate, nor any Priest, nor any Assembly of Prelates or Priests, nor any Ecclesiastical Power whatever, can absolve us, or any

of us, from, or dispense with the obligations of any compact or oath whatsoever.

IV. We have also been accused of holding, as a principle of our Religion, that not only the Pope, but even a Catholic Priest, has power to pardon the sins of Catholics, at his will and pleasure; and therefore, that no Catholic can possibly give any security for his allegiance to any Government; inasmuch as the Pope or a Priest can pardon perjury, rebellion, and high treason.

We acknowledge also the justness of this conclusion, if the proposition, upon which it is founded, were not totally false; but we do solemnly declare, that, on the contrary, we believe that no sin whatever can be forgiven at the will of any Pope, or of any Priest, or of any person whomsoever; but that a sincere sorrow for past sin, a firm resolution to avoid future guilt, and every possible atonement to God, and the injured neighbour, are the previous and indispensable requisites to establish a well-founded expectation of forgiveness.

V. And we have also been accused of holding, as a principle of our Religion, that "Faith is not to be kept with Heretics," so that no
I Government,

Government, which is not Catholic, can have any security from us, for our allegiance and peaceable behaviour.

This doctrine, that "Faith is not to be kept with Heretics," we reject, reprobate, and abhor, as being contrary to Religion, Morality, and common honesty. And we do hold and solemnly declare, that no breach of faith with any person whomsoever, can ever be justified by reason of, or under pretence, that such person is an Heretic or an Infidel.

And we further solemnly declare, that we do make this Declaration and Protestation, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words of the same, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever.

And we appeal to the justice and candour of our fellow citizens, whether we, the English Catholics, who thus solemnly disclaim, and from our hearts abhor, the above-mentioned abominable and unchristianlike principles, ought to be put upon a level with any other men who may hold and profess those principles.

Signed by fifteen hundred of the principal Catholics in England.

No.

No. II.

Abstracts from the Opinions of Foreign Universities

ALTHOUGH the English Catholics had no need of the testimony of any school or university whatsoever, to authorize them to make the above protest and declarations; yet as some persons seemed to doubt whether any foreign Catholic university would give a formal approbation to certain points contained in their declaration relative to the Pope's dispensing power, and keeping faith with Heretics, at their request the following queries were sent to PARIS, DOWAY, LOUVAIN, ALCALA, SALAMANCA, and VALLADOLID.

THE QUERIES.

1. Has the Pope, or Cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, any civil authority, power, jurisdiction

or pre-eminence whatsoever, within the realm of England ?

2. Can the Pope, or Cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, absolve or dispense with his Majesty's subjects from their oath of allegiance, upon any pretext whatsoever ?

3. Is there any principle in the tenets of the Catholic Faith, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with Heretics, or other persons differing from them in religious opinions, in any transaction, either of a public or private nature ?

Abstract from the Answer of the Sacred Faculty of Divinity of Paris to the above Queries.

After an introduction, according to the usual forms of the university, they answer the first query by declaring :—

Neither the Pope, nor the Cardinals, nor any body of men, nor any other person of the Church of Rome hath any civil authority, civil power,

power, civil jurisdiction, or civil pre-eminence whatsoever in any kingdom; and, consequently, none in the kingdom of England, by reason of the virtue of any authority, power, jurisdiction, or pre-eminence by divine institution inherent in, or granted, or by any other means belonging to the Pope, or the Church of Rome. This doctrine the Sacred Faculty of Divinity of Paris has always held, and upon every occasion maintained, and upon every occasion has rigidly proscribed the contrary doctrines from her schools.

Answer to the second query—Neither the Pope nor the Cardinals, nor any body of men, nor any person of the Church of Rome, can, by virtue of the keys, absolve or free the subjects of the King of England from their oath of allegiance.

This and the first query are so intimately connected, that the answer to the first immediately and naturally applies to the second, &c.

Answer to the third query—There is no tenet in the Catholic Church, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with Heretics, or those who differ from them in matters of religion. The tenet, that it is lawful to break faith with Heretics, is so repugnant to com-

mon honesty and the opinions of Catholics, that there is nothing of which those who have defended the Catholic Faith against Protestants have complained more heavily, than the malice and calumny of their adversaries in imputing this tenet to them, &c. &c. &c.

Given at Paris in the General Assembly of the Sorbonne, held on Thursday the 11th day before the calends of March 1789.

Signed in due form.

UNIVERSITY OF DOWAY.

Jan. 5, 1789.

At a meeting of the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Doway, &c. &c.

To the first and second queries the Sacred Faculty answers—That no power whatsoever, in civil or temporal concerns, was given by the Almighty, either to the Pope, the Cardinals, or the Church herself, and, consequently, that

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Kings and Sovereigns are not, in temporal concerns, subject, by the ordination of God, to any ecclesiastical power whatsoever; neither can their subjects, by any authority granted to the Pope or the Church, from above, be freed from their obedience, or absolved from their oath of allegiance.

This is the doctrine which the doctors and professors of divinity hold and teach in our schools, and this all the candidates for degrees in divinity maintain in their public theses, &c. &c.

To the THIRD question the Sacred Faculty answers—That there is no principle of the Catholic Faith, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with Heretics, who differ from them in religious opinions. On the contrary, it is the unanimous doctrine of Catholics, that the respect due to the name of God so called to witness, requires that the oath be inviolably kept to whomsoever it is pledged, whether Catholic, Heretic, or Infidel, &c. &c. &c.

Signed and sealed in due form.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN.

The Faculty of Divinity at Louvain, having been requested to give her opinion upon the questions above stated, does it with readiness—but struck with astonishment that such questions should, at the end of this eighteenth century, be proposed to any learned Body, by inhabitants of a kingdom that glories in the talents and discernment of its natives. The Faculty being assembled for the above purpose, it is agreed with the unanimous assent of all voices to answer the first and second queries absolutely in the negative

The Faculty does not think it incumbent upon her in this place to enter upon the proofs of her opinion, or to shew how it is supported by passages in the Holy Scriptures, or the writings of antiquity. That has already been done by Bossuet, De Marca, the two Barclays, Goldastus, the Pithæuses, Argentre Widrington, and his Majesty King James the First, in his Dissertations against Bellarmin and Du Perron, and by many others, &c. &c. &c.

The Faculty then proceeds to declare that the sovereign power of the state is in no wise (not

even indirectly as it is termed) subject to, or dependant upon, any other power; though it be a spiritual power, or even though it be instituted for eternal salvation, &c. &c.

That no man, nor any assembly of men however eminent in dignity and power, not even the whole body of the Catholic Church, though assembled in general council, can, upon any ground or pretence whatsoever, weaken the bond of union between the sovereign and the people; still less can they absolve or free the subjects from their Oath of Allegiance.

Proceeding to the third question, the said Faculty of Divinity (in perfect wonder that such a question should be proposed to her) most positively and unequivocally answers—That there is not, and that there never has been, among the Catholics, or in the doctrines of the Church of Rome, any law or principle which makes it lawful for Catholics to break their faith with Heretics, or others of a different persuasion from themselves in matters of Religion, either in public or private concerns.

The Faculty declares the doctrine of the Catholics to be, that the Divine and Natural Law, which makes it a duty to keep faith and promises, is the same; and is neither shaken nor diminished,

finished, if those with whom the engagement made, hold erroneous opinions in matters of religion, &c. &c.

Signed in due form on the 18th of November, 1788.

UNIVERSITY OF ALCALA.

to the first question it is answered—That of the persons mentioned in the proposed union, either individually, or collectively council assembled, have any right in civil matters; but that all civil power, jurisdiction and eminence are derived from inheritance, election, the consent of the people, and other such of that nature.

to the second it is answered, in like manner—That none of the persons above-mentioned have a power to absolve the subjects of his Britannic Majesty from their Oaths of Allegiance.

to the third question it is answered—That the Doctrine which would exempt Catholics from the obligation of keeping faith with Heretics,

tics, or with any other persons who differ from them in matters of religion, instead being an article of Catholic Faith, is entirely repugnant to its tenets.

Signed in the usual form, 28th Feb.

March 17th, 1789.

UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA.

To the first question it is answered—That neither Pope, nor Cardinals, nor any assembly or individual of the Catholic Church, have such, any civil authority, power, jurisdiction or pre-eminence in the kingdom of England.

To the second it is answered—That neither Pope, nor Cardinals, nor any assembly or individual of the Catholic Church, can, as such, solve the subjects of Great Britain from their Oaths of Allegiance, or dispense with its obligations.

To the third it is answered—That it is no article of Catholic faith that Catholics are bound to keep faith with Heretics, or with

of any other description, who dissent from
in matters of religion.

Signed in the usual form,
March 7th, 1789.

UNIVERSITY OF VALLADOLID.

To the FIRST question it is answered—That
neither Pope, Cardinals, or even a General Coun-
cil, have any civil authority, power, jurisdiction
or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, in the
Kingdom of Great Britain; or over any other
Kingdom or province in which they possess no
temporal dominion.

The SECOND it is answered — That neither
Pope nor Cardinals, nor even a General Council,
can absolve the subjects of Great Britain from
their Oaths of Allegiance, or dispense with
their obligation.

To the THIRD it is answered—That the
obligation of keeping faith is grounded on the
law of nature, which binds all men equally,
without respect to their religious opinions;
and,

and, with regard to Catholics, it is still more cogent, as it is confirmed by the principles of their religion.

Signed in the usual form,
February 17th, 1789.

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